TL 1077

A School for East Timor Children: Support requested

1. Beginning of an idea

On a visit to Darwin in august, 1987 I observed the night class in Timorese dance and the educational work in their home that Mr. and Mrs. Agio Pereira were doing at night. Agio's words, "Education is a weapon," and "Where there is a will, there is a way," impressed me.

2. Why a school?

(1) Timorese national identity is being lost. In East Timor, people are forced to use Indonesian. In Australia, the refugee children are educated in English. In Portugal they are educated in Portuguese. There is a danger that if this situation continues the East Timorese will be the victims of cultural genocide and be unable to build up their country after self-determination.

(2) Let's give East Timorese children, upon whom the future of East Timor rests, the chance to have a Timorese education in the Tetum language!

--In East Timor

--In refugee communities like, Darwin, Sydney and Lisbon

3. Proposal for a school

(1) Let's build a little school in Darwin!

The proposal is to start with a school for evenings and weekends that would operate with the cooperation of the local Fretilin committee and other members of the Timorese community.

(2) Let's develop an East Timor cultural center in Darwin!

The proposal is to buy land and a house in the neighborhood where the 3,000 East Timorese refugees are concentrated, to make a Darwin East Timor Cultural Center that would function as a school, library, center for adult education, meeting place and office, etc...

(3) Let's guarantee a salary for a full-time activist in the struggle for national self-determination!

At present, the leader of the Darwin Fretilin group and other members have little time to spend on the struggle because of the long hours they have to spend earning a living.

4. Let's form a group that will concretely, and step-by-step, develop this long-term plan.

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Appeal from Agio Pereira

My dear friends of Japan East Timor Coalition, it is a great pleasure that we have Mr. Takahashi with us again. We are entering a new year, 1989. And,of course, it is important to look forward and see what we have to do to advance our struggle.

The year 1988 was a very important year. It was one year during which we have advanced a lot in our diplomatic struggle. The military struggle also has advanced a lot. Apart from many news that we have made public, we also know of many military operations that took place. But due to certain problems, they have never been made public. All these together show that in terms of military and political diplomatically we have achieved a great success. We have also lost some of our comrades which we all regret. But we believe that these lossess have also contributed to the strengthening of our resistance.

We can not ignore that all the successes had very very important factors that contributed to it. And one of these of course is the solidarity movement. I am pleased to see that the last two years, solidarity movements everywhere have become better co-ordinated, more active, more aggressive. I think that Precisely because of that, Indonesian government has become also more active. And as a result,it showed all its weaknesses which we could exploit.

And this national wide network meeting of Free East Timor Japan Coalition at Osaka city, I wish you all the best and now I wish that by looking at the long term plan, to support our struggle, you remember Darwin. Darwin is the closest point to East Timor. One particular point I would like to appeal to you as I have repeatedly mentioned to Mr. Takahashi and other friends I met in Manila; I want to you to study the possibility of helping us building a school for children of Timorese people in Darwin. As

you know, education is one of our most effective weapon to resist the genocide process by Indonesian military strength impose upon us. Education is the factor to success in every aspect of our struggle. Be it political education, be it cultural, social, they all have a wider part in our struggle.

I know that all these suggestions are not easy to be met. I know how hard it is for you to be able to find ways to help us. But I also know that in the past years, you have shown the determination to support us that sometimes have gone beyond what we expected. Your support to this appeal will represent a qualitative step forward in our struggle that will in evitably bring other victories that we all will be proud of.

For this long term project, any help that you require from us, please let us know and we will do best of our best to be part of your effort to make these a reality.

To all our friends and sympathisers of East Timor Japan Coalition, we wish all the best in 1989. Have success in school, in business, and in work. These what we wish be part of your life in 1989. Thank you very much.

Appeal from Alfredo Fereira

Good morning and happy new year to our friends in Sendai. Mr. Takahashi came this time to us with a very good proposal and we are very happy to accept it if conditions will be able to accept it. His proposal is fantasic and we count on you people in Sendai and all over Japan to help us.

The two proposal, one is for radio program and the other one is education program, building a school in Darwin. We can not afford that school ourselves, see, because we do not have enough money. If you people in Sendai and all Japan could give us a hand and listen to what Mr. Takahashi is going to tell you, we will be very grateful. The school planning is for the kids. We have to look after the kids because they are the future of our people to continue our struggle for the people.

Darwin,as you know, is the closest place to East Timor. We are the front line in the struggle against the Imperialist government, Indonesian government. We need, therefore, to look after our kids, our children, because we can not keep on fighting without their help. They are in Australia, they are learning the Australian culture. Same is happening in East Timor. The Indonesians are teaching the Indonesian culture to our kids. In Portugal, they are learning Portuguese culture. So our people are losing and forgetting our culture.

So I appeal to you, to the group support in Sendai, to help us to keep our culture by helping us funding the future school. This is going to be a long program. We expect to put it into practice at end of this year. But never know what can happen at the end of the year.

So, for the radio program, Mr. takahashi, could give your more details because that will be secret and do not want to enter the details. Mr. Takahashi will give you all of the plans.

The school, we start from the children and to the adults. The adults basically is to tell them and teach them how to

preserve the culture and to allow the children to go to the school, future school, and learn what all of our East Timorese have to learn, teach them our language, our culture, otherwise we lose the war and lose the struggle against the imperialists and Javanese imperialists.

The Indonesian people are very strong, or rather, the Indonesian policies in the northern territory are very strong. They are working together with the northern territory with the government of Australia to get rid of our struggle outside of the war.

Without your help, I don't think we can keep for much longer. Thank you.

Fretilin Commitee in Darwin
January,1st 1989

Dear Solidarity Friends of Free East Timor Japanese Coalition in Japan,

I would like to address all of you, the honourable members of Japanese parliament, the members of Free East Timor Japanese Coalition, the members of YWCA and YMCA, International Amnesty, the Catholic and Christian Commitee for Peace and Justice and all humanitarian associations on behalf of my family and me with all our open hearts express our very deep gratitude for all material and moral support given to myself and the just struggle of our thousand times heroic Maubere people for liberation of East Timor.

We would like to wish you a happy new year,1989.

Finally, our last appeal is: for your material support for the maintenance of our radio communications in Darwin, and to construct a small school where our kids can learn and preserve our language and culture.

Our solidarity greetings to all our brave and tireless solidarity members on struggle for justice and peace.

Our struggle is going on until our liberation!

Jose Gusmao and family

Appeal from Mrs. Gusmao

I am Mrs. Gusmao. I would like to appeal for everyone, specially for our friends in Japan that Mr. Takahashi been in Australia, in Darwin, with us and they did a meeting yesterday and idea to give us, to do a small school from all your support you give my husband, Mr. Gusmao, in Japan.

We are thinking that we need to do a small school for our kids, our children, for the day of tomorrow. One day, maybe they grow up and they can still have known their own culture and we need all your support, specially our friends, the Japanese. And we know that idea is very good for all of us and specially for us, Timorese and in Darwin and in the other parts. They can still, our children, still learn our culture and our language and the struggle against the imperialist, colonialist Javanese in our country and we hope very much that all Japanese, our friends, they can help, because we really need their helps.

And, thank you very much to support my husband when he was in Japan for one month. He came back to us very healthy and we are very happy. Thank you very much.

Contents of video recorded Jan. 1, 1989 in Darwin

(1) Message from Agio Pereira, chairperson of the Darwin Fretilin Committee, to the Free East Timor Japan Coalition meeting in Osaka (Jan. 14-15)
(2) Shots of the East Timor documentation room of an Australian supporter of the East Timorese. Note the books documenting the Japanese occupation of Timor during World War II and the military script that was issued by the Japanese army at that time.
(3) Message from Alfredo Ferreira (older brother of Mimi Ferreira, who visited Japan in the winter of 1986) to the Sendai group and all the support groups in Japan.
(4) Message from Jose Adriano Gusmao (who visited Japan in the winter of 1988) to supporters in Japan. (He is reading a message he wrote at the airport before my departure.)
(5) Message and words of gratitude from Mrs. Gusmao. (At the Darwin airport.)

All the messages are in English. They are for use within support groups, not for publication.

CHIEF SECRETARY and REGULAR DIRECTOR

MICHIO TAKAHASHI

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